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Level : First year

 Module : Grammar

 Course : The sentence, the clause, the phrase : Basic definitions

Introduction

Human beings are makers of meaning. In daily life, people use sentences in both speech and writing in actual communication. Shorter utterances are usually reconstructed and understood by reference to clauses. For instance, over here might be understood as I’m over here or Shine the light over here. In fact the clause most directly represents the most fundamental structure of meaning—the proposition

Definition of Sentence:

 **A sentence is a group of words that is complete in itself, typically containing a subject, modifier, and predicate, conveying a statement, question, exclamation, or command, and consisting of a**[**main clause**](https://englishcompositions.com/clauses-in-english-grammar/)**and sometimes one or more subordinate clauses.**

**A sentence is used to communicate a fact, a request, ask a question, and to express strong emotion.**

* I do not know a way to the supermarket.
* I enjoyed the party last night.
* The child ran into his bed room.

The sentence has several units combining various [parts of speech](https://englishcompositions.com/parts-of-speech-in-english-grammar/), and each section has its importance in a sentence or purpose of your speech or writing.

**The following are the required parts of a sentence.**

## Subject

A subject is that part of a sentence that tells *who* or *what* the sentence is about. The subject can be [noun](https://englishcompositions.com/noun-in-english-grammar/), [pronoun](https://englishcompositions.com/pronoun-in-english-grammar/)or [noun](https://partsofspeech.net/phrases-in-english-grammar-with-examples/)[phrase](https://partsofspeech.net/phrases-in-english-grammar-with-examples/). The subject comes before the [verb phrase](https://englishcompositions.com/phrases-in-english-grammar-with-examples/) in a sentence.

**For example,**

* **Peter** walked down the street.
* **The black cat** is sleeping under the table.
* **Peter** and **the black cat** are the subjects of the sentences.

There are also different types of subjects. A simple, a complete subject and a compound subject.

A simple subject is only a word without any [modifiers](https://englishcompositions.com/modifier-in-english-grammar/) having a noun or pronoun whereas a whole subject a sentence with all modifiers and a compound subject made up of more than one subject element.

**For example,**

* **Kate** is a thin girl (simple subject).
* **Kate’s poem** about her dead mother made the class cry (complete subject).
* **Paul** and **Bob** joined the Manchester United at the same time (compound subject).

## Predicate

A predicate is that part of a sentence which includes the [verb](https://englishcompositions.com/verb-in-english-grammar/)and everything that follows it. A predicate consists of the verb and can also contain [phrases](https://englishcompositions.com/phrases-in-english-grammar-with-examples/), [clauses](https://englishcompositions.com/clauses-in-english-grammar/) and [modifying words](https://englishcompositions.com/word-in-english-grammar/).

* Tom **walked** down the street.

In the above example “walked” is an action verb that tells what Tommy is doing and “down the street” is an adverb phrase that modifies the verb by explaining where he walked. Combining all the words make up a complete predicate of the sentence, and the verb alone is a simple predicate. A compound predicate consists of two different actions.

**For example,**

* Kate cried (simple predicate).
* The cat slowly runs towards the food (complete predicate).
* She laughed at the dog’s activities and decided to adopt him.

Complement

A complement in a sentence includes [adjective](https://englishcompositions.com/adjective-in-english-grammar/), noun or pronoun that is followed by a linking verb.

**For example,**

* Brandon is a gifted athlete.

Brandon is a subject, is – linking verb and athlete is a noun as a subject complement.

Modifier

Modifiers are those words or part of a sentence which gives additional information of a sentence. The thing that you have to remember in about modifier is adjectives modify nouns and pronouns, while [adverb](https://englishcompositions.com/adverb-in-english-grammar/)modifies verbs and adjectives.

**For example,**

* The blue boat sank.
* The ship slowly sank.

In the first example, the adjective modifies the subject, and in the second example, the adverb modifies the simple predicate.

## Types of a sentence

**Depending on the way of writing there are mainly four types of sentences.**

1. **A simple or declarative sentence (I am studying.)**
2. **Command or imperative sentence (Go away.)**
3. **Question or interrogative sentence (What time is it?)**
4. **Exclamatory sentence (I’m so excited!)**

Remember

‘A sentence is a group of words which, when they are written down, begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop, question mark, or exclamation mark. Most sentences contain a subject and a verb’. (Hanks, 2006, p. 1314).

‘A sentence is a group of words that expresses a statement, command, question, or exclamation. A sentence consists of one or more clauses, and usually has at least one subject and verb. In writing, it begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop, question mark, or exclamation mark. (Swan, 2005, p. xxiv).

A group of words which makes a complete thought is called a sentence. (Martin, 2000, p. 1).

‘When one person says something to another, or puts what he says into writing, he uses a combination of words which is called a sentence. (Nesfield, 2014, p. 1).

Examples Fire burns.

 Dogs bark.

 His courage won him honour.

Using different types of sentences allows to highlight different relationships between ideas and

 add variety to your writing. Learn how to construct sentences accurately, so that your meaning is clear.

**What Are the Different Types of Sentences?**

Sentences are divided into four categories: simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences, and compound-complex sentences.

**Simple Sentences**

**Definition** : A simple sentence contains one independent clause.

Examples  Salim rode his bike to school.

  Who is your best friend?

  Betty ate her lunch, took a walk, and went back to work.

A simple sentence is one which has only one subject and one predicate. (Martin, 2000, p. 193).

A simple sentence is one that has only one finite verb, expressed or understood. (Nesfield, 2014, p. 93).

So, it is obvious that without studying clauses, it is not easy to understand simple sentence.

Elements of a simple sentence :

1. One subject, which is ‘Salim’.
2. ‘His’ is a possessive adjective, and an adjective can never be used alone as a subject in a sentence. Nouns used with possessive adjectives (my, his, her, your, our, their) become subjects.
3. A finite or principal verb ‘rode’.

Furthermore, ‘Because of his being ill, he couldn’t go to work yesterday’. ‘Being’ is not a principal verb because it isn’t preceded by helping verbs like am, is, are, was, or were. It is a present or a kind of non-finite verb.

So, the sentence has only one subject and one finite verb, and the sentence is simple.

**Compound Sentences**

Definition: A **compound sentence** contains two or more **main**, also called **independent clauses** and **no dependent clause**. The main clauses may be joined by a coordinating conjunction (**and**, **but**, **or**, **for**, **nor**, **so**, **yet**) and a comma; by a semicolon; by a semicolon and a transitional word (**however**, **nevertheless**, **therefore**); or by a correlative conjunction such as **both**. . .**and**, or **either**. . . **or**. A coordinating conjunction (**for**, **and**, **nor**, **but**, **or**, **yet**, **so**) often links the two independent clauses and is preceded by a comma.

Examples  She wanted to go on vacation, **so** she saved up her money.

  I like apples, **but** my sister loves bananas.

  Tim loves to read, **and** he also loves to hike.

A sentence which is made up of principal or main clauses, is called a compound sentence. (Martin, 2000, p. 194).

A compound sentence is one made up of two or more coordinate clauses. Coordinate clauses are joined together by the coordinative conjunctions. (Nesfield, 2014, p. 93).

Elements of a compound sentence are:

1. Two or more subjects + two or more finite or principal verbs

b) Two main clauses

 c) One of the coordinating conjunctions stated before

Example The sun rose, and the fog dispersed.

Here, the sun is ‘subject’, the fog is another ‘subject’

Rose and dispersed are ‘two verbs’

‘And’ coordinating conjunction

‘The sun rose’ is the main clause

‘The fog dispersed’ is another main clause

**NB**: if the subjects and verbs of two sentences joined together with and, but or yet, are same, the subjects and verbs of the second sentences can be omitted.

**Complex Sentences**

Definition : A complex sentence contains one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses. A complex sentence will include at least one subordinating conjunction.

Examples  She went to class even though she was sick.

  As John was arriving to work, he realized he forgot his lunch.

  While I enjoy classical music, I prefer rock and roll because I play the drums.

A complex sentence consists of a Principal Clause (i.e. the clause containing the main or finite verb of the sentence) with one or more subordinate clauses. (Nesfield, 2014, p. 93).

The subordinating conjunctions that join the principal clause to one or more subordinate ones are: if, though, although, as, since, so that, that, because, until, till, unless, when, where, why, who, which, before, how, whether, while, after, than, lest, what, whom, whose etc.

From the above stated definitions, a complex sentence must include the following elements:

a) Two or more subjects + two or more finite or principal verbs.

b) One principal clause + one or more subordinate clauses.

c) One of the subordinating conjunctions stated before.

For Example Unless you revise the lessons attentively, you may not pass the test.

Here, You +you= 2 subjects

Revise+ pass= two finite verbs

Unless= subordinating conjunction

Unless you revise the lessons attentively= subordinate clause

You may not pass the test= Principal or main clause

So, the sentence is undoubtedly complex

**Compound-Complex Sentences**

Definition : A compound-complex sentence combines complex sentence and compound sentence forms. A compound-complex sentence contains one or more independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses, ie. a compound-complex sentence joins two or more independent clauses with one or more subordinate clauses.

Examples  Although she felt guilty for missing her friend’s birthday, she took her out to dinner the next day, and they had a great time.

  I try to eat healthy food, but because fast food is so convenient, I cannot maintain a healthy diet.

**Task**: Identify the sentence type. Circle any coordinating or subordinating conjunctions.

Underline independent clauses once and dependent clauses twice.

1. Harry Potter was rejected from many publishers before J.K. Rowling found success.

Sentence type: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. Even though the patients showed various symptoms, the clinical study found that lack of sleep contributes to the inability to focus, irritability, and poorer health.

Sentence type: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. More and more students are relying on online databases to find sources.

Sentence type: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4. The business analysts proposed higher numbers for next quarter, and they expect to exceed those numbers the following quarter.

Sentence type: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

5. Homeless teens face intense obstacles, but when it comes to schooling, they do have the chance to receive an education if they enroll in a special program.

Sentence type: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Forms of sentences**:

### **Declarative Sentence**

This is the most common form of sentence. A simple sentence can be in any [tense](https://englishcompositions.com/tense-in-english-grammar/). The following sentences make statements, fact or opinion. The primary purpose of these sentences is to provide information. The sentence can either be simple or compound one having a subject and a predicate. The declarative sentence tells the reader what is going on only.

**For example,**

* He runs.
* I like swimming.
* My dog is brown.
* I love to practice surfing.
* He wants to eat coscous.

All the above examples are simple.

### **Interrogative Sentences**

This time the sentences **ask or interrogate questions**. These sentences are punctuated by a question mark and are direct questions. Mostly interrogative sentences start with why, whom, what, how, where. It is essential to know that the interrogative sentences need a noun and a verb to complete.

**For example,**

* Why does the sun shine?
* Who is the present governor of New York?
* Where is the Statue of Liberty in the US?

### **Imperative Sentence**

Imperative sentences do not directly state the fact; instead, they tell someone to do something. The subject in this sentence may be missing. These sentences make requests and make commands. The important thing is that imperative sentences end with a period. The sentence tells people what to do. These are also referred to as directive sentences as the sentence provides direction.

**For example,**

* Pass the sugar.
* Shut the front window.
* Keep quiet.
* Clean your hands.

Every case above gives the direction to be work done.

### **Exclamatory Sentence**

Exclamatory sentences are similar to the declarative sentences which make a statement instead of asking a question. The primary purpose of these sentences is to express strong emotion. These sentences are easily identified as they end with an exclamation mark instead of a period.

**For example,**

* How well he paints!
* Wow, he just won a golden medal!
* She is going to fall!
* I got trip tickets for the Baccalaureat success!

[Exclamatory words](http://www.manikjoshi.com/z-manik-joshi-book-edu-05-lee.html#.XM0kB-gzbIU) are used in the sentence. They express strong emotion, anger, and pleasure. These sentences are mainly used in emails and texts. They are rare in business and minimum used in academic writing.

Some exclamatory words which show some emotion and anger are alas! Represents worry and sadness, Um! Expresses hesitation, Yum! Represents a feeling of pleasant taste and smell when you start a sentence with an exclamatory word you have to place either a comma or exclamatory mark after the word.

**For example,**

* Ah, what a wonderful gift!

This is all about the sentence its parts and forms. Learn about the sentence to increase your knowledge.

Forests that have existed for thousands of years are in danger, and citizens must take action. (Forests are in danger and citizens must take action= independent clauses; that have existed for thousands of years= subordinate clause)

The best researched and useful method of teaching students how to create complex sentences is sentence combining (Scott, 2009)

Remember

Most language use in English does not consist of isolated propositions. Human communication is not a sequence of independent, unrelated clauses made up of simple subjects followed by simple predicates. Clause and sentence are interrelated with each other. It is really difficult for a learner to decide whether a sentence is simple, complex or compound without having much idea about clauses in a classroom.

Definition of Clause:

 Clauses are the basic elements of what is called an utterance in oral language and a sentence in written language. Utterances and sentences are considered complex if they contain two or more

clauses, whereas simple utterances and sentences are made of one clause only. A phrase is a

group of words that forms a meaningful unit within a clause.

A **clause** is a group of words which has:

 a **subject**, ie. the focus of the clause, or someone or thing which does something in the

clause

 and

 a **complete finite verb**, ie. a verb which has a subject and a sense of time

For example, Subject Verb

 The lecture finished at 3 pm

 Pollution causes cancer

A clause is a sentence or a part of sentence having a subject and a finite or principal verb; usually joined to the rest of a sentence by a conjunction.

A clause is a ‘part of a sentence which contains a subject and a verb, usually joined to the rest of a sentence by a conjunction’. (Swan, 2005, p. xvii)

‘A clause is a group of words that includes a subject and a verb’. (http://www.grammar-monster.com/glossary/clause.htm).

A clause is a group of words containing a verb. (Hanks, 2006, p. 246)A clause is a group of words that contains a finite verb. (Das, 2008, p. 266).

A clause, which is a group of related words may express a complete thought or may not.

A group of words that forms a part of a sentence, and has a subject and a predicate of its own, is called a clause. (Martin, 2000, p. 186).

A typical clause consists of a subject and a predicate, where the predicate is typically a verb phrase – a verb together with any objects and other modifiers.

 In grammar, a clause can be usefully distinguished from *a phrase, which is* *a group of related words that does not contain a subject-verb relationship, such as "in the morning" or "running down the street". It is a single part of speech between the word and the clause.* *For example, some*

*phrases act as nouns, some as verbs, some as adjectives or adverbs. Remember that phrases can’t stand alone as sentences. In some cases, the phrase can be a clause in itself, or contain clauses and other phrases within it.*

*Examples*

Natural resources that provide energy will run out eventually. ( Clause )

 The man you saw is my father.

**What is a clause?**

Clauses are either **dependent** or **independent**. An **independent clause ( simple sentence)**, also called **main clause** can exist by itself as a complete sentence (as in “I love grammar.”), while a **dependent clause** cannot.

**INDEPENDENT CLAUSES (THE SIMPLE SENTENCE)**

In English, the following examples are independent clauses:

Put it on the desk!

The streets are empty

The main cause of suffering is traced to selfish craving.

However

 Karim wrote a research paper on motivation. He submitted it for publication. (Two independent clauses.)

Karim wrote a research paper on motivation, **and** he submitted it for publication. (Compound sentence.

The two independent clauses are joined by a **comma** and the coordinating conjunction **and**.)

**Note**: Remember that what follows the word **and** (or any other coordinating conjunction) is an independent clause. If not, then do not use a comma.

Example: Karim wrote a research paper and submitted it for publication. (No comma is needed because submitted it for publication is not an independent clause; it does not have its own subject).

**DEPENDENT CLAUSES (SUBORDINATE CLAUSE)**

Subordinate clauses depend on main clauses and are therefore referred to as dependent clauses. These clauses have a verb and can have arguments or complements, but they do not express a complete thought.

**A dependent clause** grammatically can function as a noun, adjective (relative), or adverb.

* An **adjective clause** or (**adjectival clause)** describes noun or pronoun just like an adjective. It begins with a relative pronoun (who, whom, whose, that, and which) or a relative adverb (when, where or why). The following sentences contain a relative clause:

 I thank the friend ***who gives me a gift***

My neighbor is a person ***whom I like very much***

Can I have the pen **(*that*) *I lent you this morning***?

An adjective clause is either restrictive or nonrestrictive (also called defining and non-defining, essential and nonessential, or integrated and supplementary):

**Restrictive Clause**: Begins with a relative pronoun like **that** or **who** (or sometimes **which** -- see Which Versus That). "The building ***that they built in San Francisco sold for a lot of money***." It tells you which person, place, or thing the writer is referring to. The information in the restrictive is necessary to complete the sentence. (Baker, 2003, p. 124). So, it specifies or restricts the noun; in this case, it specifies which building the speaker is referring to.

Relative clause is ‘a clause which modifies a noun, usually introduced by a relative pronoun like who or which. (Swan, 2005, p. xxiv).

Relative clauses describe, identify, or give more information about the nouns they follow. (Kirn, 2009, p. 214).

An adjective clause works like adjective in a sentence. The function of an adjective is to modify a noun or a pronoun. ”

(http://www.studyandexam.com/types-of-subordinate-clause.html).

**Note**: the relative pronoun is often omitted ("The building (that) they built"), leaving what is called an elliptical clause or contact clause.

 **Nonrestrictive Clause** :"The building, ***which they built in San Francisco, sold for a lot of money***." A nonrestrictive clause begins with a relative pronoun like **which** or **who**. ‘A nonrestrictive relative clause gives additional information. This additional information is not necessary to complete the sentence.’ (Baker, 2003, p. 124).

A comma is used to separate a nonrestrictive clause from the rest of the sentence. So it adds extra information about an already-specific noun; in this case, there's only one building to talk about, whereas the example for the restrictive clause implies that there could be several buildings.

* A noun clause is a dependent clause that serves the same function as a **noun.** ‘The noun clause does the work of a noun’. (Das, 2008, p. 267**);** (e. g. subject, direct object, indirect object, object of the preposition, and predicate nominative). Noun clauses may seem similar to relative clauses but differ by the fact that a noun clause takes the place of the noun in the sentence, whereas a relative clause will be dependent on the noun in the sentence.

 ***Whoever crosses the finish line first*** wins the race.

He did not know ***that the time was up***

* An **adverbial clause** expresses when, where, why, and how something occurs, just like an adverb. An adverb clause is a group of words which contains a subject and a predicate of its own, and does the work of an adverb. (Martin, 2000, p. 186). In other words, it modifies a verb, an adjective, another adverb or even a sentence. In some languages, such as English or French, the adverbial clause may precede or follow the associated main clause: "I'll do the laundry ***when I'm out of clothes***."

A dependent clause is an adverb clause if you can replace it with an adverb, as in "I'll do the laundry *later*.

 **Task 1:** Underline the dependent clause in these sentences.

1. The scientists discussed the issues that the conference had raised.

2. The company rejected the parts whose design was defective.

3. We found the bird whose wing had been damaged.

4. The children looked as if they had been playing in a dirt mound.

5. Mary went shopping while Barbara was working.

6. Betty missed her appointment because she was in a car accident

**Task 2**: Insert commas where necessary in these sentences and circle them. Identify the coordinating conjunction and write it in the space on the right. If a sentence is correct, write "OK."

1. He enjoyed being a juror and he'd be happy to serve again if asked. ......................

2. We can leave here about 9:00 a.m. or we can leave after lunch. ......................

3. Mark asked for an application for he wanted to apply for the job. ......................

4. Kate left the office but she will return in two hours. ......................

**Task 3**: Underline the subject and the verb in the following clauses. Then decide if each clause is dependent (D) or independent (Ind).

1. Dairying is concentrated in districts with reliable summer grass. ...............

2. Although it started out with a similar fauna and flora to New Caledonia and Australia. ...............

3. Scarcity creates the need for a system to allocate the available resource among some of its potential users. ..............

4. Banks, insurance companies, and investment companies can now enter one another’s markets. ............

5. These obvious contamination problems have long been known. ..................

**SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS**

Include (among others not in this list): because, as, if, even though, although, since, whereas, when, how, whenever, while, and so that. Subordinating conjunctions can also be duplicates of words that have other functions (such as *when*, *how*, *even*), so you have to watch where the word is placed in a sentence to see its function.

**DEFINITION OF PHRASE**

Phrases, which are basic constituents of clauses (along with subordinate clauses), are groups of words organized around what is called a head-word. If the head of the phrase is a noun, the phrase is called a noun phrase (NP). Similarly, if the head is a verb, the phrase is a verb phrase (VP).

The ability to differentiate between a gerund phrase and an infinitive phrase or a participial phrase and a prepositional phrase will help learners: 1) to understand how they work and avoid mistaking them for sentences, 2) avoid misplacing them or leaving them dangling in sentences, 3) use them effectively in combining sentences or produce more mature sentences using phrases and clauses.

**In order to know the difference between phrases and clauses follow the two kinds of word groups.**

1. the bus to Algiers

2. the bus goes to Algiers

In the second group of words, we can identify a subject-verb unit, while in the first we cannot.

To find the subject-verb units in sentences, follow these two steps:

1. First find the verb by applying the time test: change the time or tense of the sentence; the word

you change is the verb.

In number 2, we can change

The bus ***goes*** to Algiers.

to: The bus ***went*** to Algiers. (yesterday)

or: The bus ***will go*** to Algiers. (tomorrow)

 So the time of the verb changes from **goes** to **went** or to **will go**.

 If the time or tense of the lst group of words does not change because it has no verb that changes, then it can't have a subject-verb unit and therefore is called a **phrase**.

2. To find the subject, ask "Who or what does the action of the verb?” What “goes?” The answer is

**the** **bus**, so **the** **bus** is the subject of the verb. Therefore, it is a **clause** as itcontains the subject-verb unit **the bus goes**.

(Alternatively, one can ask: what is the first noun in the sentence, and that is almost always going to be the subject of the sentence.)

To find out if a group of words is a complete sentence or **clause** from an incomplete one or **phrase**, ask questions using: **Is it true that** beforethe words.

1. **Is it true** **that** the bus to Algiers?

2. **Is it true** **that** the bus goes to Algiers?

Though the first question above has a subject (“the bus”), but does not make sense. It does not have a

Verb and it is not a complete idea. It is a phrase, and hence a sentence fragment.

 However, the second question does make sense. It has a subject and a verb and is a complete idea.

Therefore, “The bus goes to Algiers” is a clause and it is also a complete sentence.

**Types of Phrases**

**The Prepositional Phrase**: It is the most common phrase found everywhere—in sentences, clauses, and even in other phrases. Each phrase begins with a preposition (in, of, by, from, for, etc.; see and includes a noun or pronoun that is the object of the preposition.

*In* the *room*

*Of* the *people*

*By* the *river*

*From* the *teacher*

For the *party*

The object of a preposition can have its own modifiers, which also are part ofthe prepositional phrase.

in *the smoky, crowded* room

of *the remaining few* people

by *the rushing* river

from *the tired and frustrated* teacher

for *the midnight victory* party

Prepositional phrases function as either adjectives or adverbs.

The woman *in the trench coat* pulled out her cellular phone.

The prepositional phrase here acts as an adjective describing the noun *woman*.

Most of the audience snoozed *during the tedious performance*.

The prepositional phrase here acts as an adverb modifying the verb *snoozed.*

**The participial phrase**

A participial phrase begins with a past or present participle and is followed by its objects and modifiers. Like participles alone, participial phrases are used as adjectives.

*Sniffing the fresh air*, Jim realized he had found paradise.

The present participle *sniffing* introduces the participial phrase, which includes the participle’s object (*air*) and its modifiers (*the*, *fresh*). This **participial phrase** acts as **an adjective** modifying the subject of the sentence (*Jim*)

 The soldiers, *trapped by the enemy*, threw down their guns.

The past participle *trapped* introduces the participial phrase *trapped by the enemy*. The entire phrase acts as an adjective modifying the subject of the sentence (*soldiers*). Notice the phrase-within-a-phrase here. By *the enemy* is a prepositional phrase modifying the participle *trapped*. Remember that phrases can act as modifiers in other phrases.

**The gerund phrase**

A gerund phrase may look like a participial phrase because gerund phrases begin with the –ing form of a verb (*riding*, *seeing*, *talking*, etc.) and have objects and modifiers. But a **gerund phrase** always acts as **a** **noun** in a sentence, not as an adjective. Like other nouns, a gerund phrase can serve as the subject of a sentence, the object of a verb or preposition, or the complement of a linking verb.

In the following example, the gerund phrase *Riding the black stallion* acts as a noun and is the subject of the verb terrified.

*Riding the black stallion* terrified Hugh

In the next sentence, the gerund phrase *seeing* the suspect is the direct object of the verb reported. Notice that the entire phrase, not just the word suspect, is the direct object.

The police officer reported *seeing the suspect*.

Here, the gerund phrase *talking often and loudly* is the object of the preposition by.

The senator made his reputation by *talking often and loudly*.

Finally, *Calling Uncle Roberto* is a gerund phrase acting as the subject of the sentence. Asking for trouble is a gerund phrase acting as a complement of the linking verb is.

*Calling Uncle Roberto* is *asking for trouble*.

**The infinitive phrase**

An infinitive phrase contains an infinitive (for example, *to sleep*, *to have slept*, *to consider*, *to throw*) and its objects and modifiers. Infinitive phrases usually function as nouns, though they can be used as adjectives and adverbs.

In this sentence, *To sleep all night* is an infinitive phrase acting as a noun. It is the subject of this sentence.

*To sleep all night* was his only wish.

Here, *To take an unpopular stand* is an infinitive phrase acting as a noun. It is the direct object of the predicate *didn’t want*.

The representatives didn’t want *to take an unpopular stand*.

Next, the infinitive phrase *to spend foolishly* acts as an adjective modifying the noun money.

He had plenty of money *to spend foolishly*.

In the following sentence, the infinitive phrase *to clear her mind* acts as an adverb modifying *drove*. It answers the question “Why did she drive?”

After the confrontation, she drove miles *to clear her mind*.

**Task1**: Identify the following italized phrases as prepositional phrase, participial phrase, gerund phrase, or infinitive phrase.

a.*Dreaming about mice* is my cat Mocha’s favorite hobby.

b.Kevin wants *to make* the world a better place.

c.*Lying on his bed*, Richard felt better.

d.Ted sneezed *in church*.

e.Dr. Tucker planned *to have read* that book.

**Task2**: Identify the function of the underlined dependent clauses.

a.*When my father called from Japan*, Mother threw down her knitting and hurried to answer the phone.

b.The prom, *which is usually held in May*, was delayed by the late snowstorm.

c.*Whoever adjusted my seat* must have been tall.

**Task3**: True or False: All of the following are independent clauses.

a.Sherry smiled.

b.The Russian impressionist collection, with all their dramatic colors and themes.

c.To have been loved is to have known joy and pain

**Task4**: Underline the complete subject in the following sentences.

a.My cousin Andy, a shy man, was married last summer.

b.The office will be closed on Thursday.

c.Get ready!

**Task5**: Underline the complete predicate in the following sentences.

a.Through the quiet, dark streets came Lizz, determined not to get lost.

b.After a deep winter sleep, the bears emerged hesitantly.

c.Andrei visited the Grand Canyon last summer.

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